



# *The Virginia Saltwater Review*

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by

**Department of Plans and Statistics, Fisheries Management Division**

## **OVERVIEW**



Welcome back after two weeks of great summertime fishing! We are excited to provide you pictures of the Grand Opening of the Buckroe Fishing Pier in Hampton. Anglers lined up early as the dignitaries of the day proceeded with dedication of the pier and the ceremonial ribbon cutting. Soon afterwards, anglers rolled onto the pier to begin a new chapter in Buckroe Pier fishing history. The Buckroe Pier has also become the newest contributor to the Virginia Saltwater Review (see the Virginia Piers section for the fishing report). Two of VMRC's recreational programs are already in place at the pier —the Marine Sportfish Collection Program and the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program. A Spanish Mackerel has been donated through the collection program, and fishing line has started to fill the recycling bins.



Beyond the great news of the new pier, the past weeks' fishing has included some decent offshore fishing action including yellowfin tuna, dolphin, and several mako shark. Inshore, it's Virginia summertime as usual, according to several of our local bait shop owners and fishing gurus. Drum can still be found, along with speckled trout, flounder, sea mullet, spot, and croaker. This week also brought the first reports of cobia catches in the area. There are also reports of the spadefish bite beginning as well. Let's all look forward to a great week of fishing!

## **THE FISHING REPORT**

### **Chincoteague**

Flounder, flounder, and more flounder were reported from Captain Bob's Marina. These fish can be found throughout the area, with the usual hot spots still holding strong. Gulp and Smelt have been the best baits so far this year.

### **Onancock**

In Onancock, Capt. Wil reported black drum and cobia catches. Croaker were around last week as well, with some areas producing better than others. Small bluefish, a few grey trout, and red drum were also reported.

### **Wachapreague**

Fishing out of the Wachapreague Marina has been consistent over the past few weeks. Keeper flounder averages are 1 in 15. Offshore fishing in the Norfolk Canyon has produced small yellowfin tuna and gaffers dolphin.

At Captain Zed's, staff reports that flounder fishing has been good, with a lot of 18- and 19-inch throwbacks. Green and Drawing channels are hot spots, as well as some areas on the flats as the water has warmed over the past weeks. Anglers were also catching red drum in the surf outside of Dawson Shoals. Wreck fishing has been good with black sea bass and the first offshore trips reported dolphin, yellowfin tuna, and a shark release.

### **Cape Charles**

According to staff at Chris' Bait and Tackle, a few cobia were caught by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, and spadefish have started biting at the Chesapeake Light Tower. Croaker were reported at Morley's Wharf, and flounder are still biting at buoys 36, 38 and 42. Red drum are still available at the surf of the barrier islands.

### **Lower Bay/Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel**

Anglers were catching limits of striped bass around the bay and the local bridges, according to the Sunset Boating Center. A very large bluefish was caught near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Flounder were reported from Salt Ponds Marina this week. There were reports of anglers catching multiple keeper-sized flounder in the area.

According to staff at the York River Fishing Center, anglers were catching croaker, speckled trout, and flounder off of the Gloucester Point Pier. The same species were also reported from the bay.

Ken Neill, reporting secretary for the Peninsula Anglers Club, contributed the following:

There are so many things to fish for. Everything is just breaking loose. The spadefish bite is heating up. They are being caught at the Chesapeake Light Tower and at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. There will be some caught at the Cell and at Wolfrap this week. Cobia have entered the mix with a number of them caught this past weekend. The chum will be flowing now. The early season hot spot will be the western side of the bay in areas like the Rock Pile and Bluefish Rock. Flounder fishing has vastly improved. Good catches are being made at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, Buoy 36A, and up around the Cell. Speckled trout fishing remains good in the Mobjack Bay. Large red drum are very active on the shoals at the mouth of the bay and along the Eastern Shore beaches. Big black drum are still being caught at buoys 10, 13, and 16 though this bite has slowed. Croaker are everywhere. They are plentiful in all of the rivers. Offshore, dolphin fishing is as good as it gets. Tuna fishing is slow. Some blue marlin, wahoo, and sailfish are being caught. The best fishing is still out of the Outer Banks, though Virginia boats are getting in on the action with some long runs offshore.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The weather is warm and the fish are here, so it's time to bait up and hit the water. Anglers mostly continue to chase very cooperative red and black drum while awaiting the spadefish bite. The spades are here and schooled around most usual locations but have yet to launch into their typical early feeding explosion. These fish are still holding tight to structure, with most fish averaging below five pounds. A few incidental catches of big spades have anglers' hopes up, such as the impressive 9-pound, 13-ounce spade caught by Leo Olivarez of Virginia Beach while casting a swimming lure intended for bluefish at the 3<sup>rd</sup> island this week. The drum on the other hand, are still imparting great catches along the Eastern Shore shoals, with the area south of Fisherman's Island, near buoy 10, still the most popular spot for both reds and blacks. Some boats are releasing more than a dozen fish in one outing lately.

Cobia catches are becoming more prevalent as these covert fish make their way to the spawning grounds. Many of the biggest fish will come from the Grandview, Back River, and Buckroe areas early in the season. Live eels, croaker, and cut bait works well this time of year.

Flounder pounders are sifting through many shorts to get their bounties, but a few bigger fish are rounding out some catches. Folks are still working the inlets for the best chance of landing keepers.

Smaller grey trout are available around the Concrete Ships, the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel, and Sewell's Point, as well as a few decent flounder up to 21 inches. But the best news about the grey trout is the debut of larger fish at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Chris at Chris' Bait and Tackle

reports that greys ranging to around eight pounds are hitting grubs presented around the northern span of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel.

Pier anglers along the ocean front are picking through small flounder, small croaker, and taylor bluefish. Larger croaker are still available within the tributary rivers. Anglers trolling off Cape Henry have hooked into a few Spanish mackerel, along with taylor bluefish. Expect this trend to improve as the waters warm.

Deep dropping ventures are still rewarding most boats with coolers full of blueline tilefish and black sea bass, although most catches of blueline tilefish are of the smaller variety right now.

If you venture to the deep, you may also have a chance at a golden tile, grouper, or even a mako shark. Several makos were hooked and boated lately.

Offshore, the fishing continues to deliver. The good season introduction is fulminating positive prospects about the offshore trend for the year. Decent catches of nice yellowfin tuna and gaffer dolphin were accented by a whirlwind of billfish activity near the Triple Zeros this week, where several blue and white marlin were released. Michael Hall of Virginia Beach also landed a nice 38-pound dolphin while trolling at the Cigar this week.

### **Virginia Middle Bay**

Roger, at Jett's Hardware, reports the fishing is improving with good sized striped bass, a few small bluefish, and flounder being caught. Croaker are now moving from the rivers to the deeper water of the bay, and they are still on the large side.

Dan, at Smith Point Marina, reports that although the large stripers have left, there are still keepers to be caught. Croaker are being caught in good numbers, along with a few small spot. Flounder are in their usual place—at the Jetties at Smith Point.

Capt. Jim Thompson reports that croaker are in the bay now with sizes up to 18 inches. Everyone seems to be filling their coolers, although you have to work for them. One technique has been to present your squid in strips, and tip it with a little blood worm. There were reports of good catches in the Rappahannock near Waterview on the opposite side of the river in 17 feet of water. A few flounder were reported at the Cell, and spot are arriving off of Gwynns Island and in the Rappahannock.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Waters are starting to warm as bay surface temps near the Cell approach 70 degrees. Spadefish were caught at the Chesapeake Bay Light Tower this weekend and should start biting in the bay this week. The Cell and Wolf Trap should hold fish by week's end.

Flounder have not settled down. The ratio of throw-backs to keepers has dropped somewhat, so some bigger fish are arriving, but it is still tough fishing. This appears to be state-wide as very few citations have been registered in Virginia thus far this season. For a change, there seem to be as many early season keepers on the west side of the bay this year as on the east side.

Creeks and rivers are full of croaker. In addition to croaker, we caught several medium spot from my dock on Saturday. Speckled trout have started biting in the Piankatank River with one citation registered this week and some other good catches reported. Puppy drum (juvenile red drum) and bluefish have entered our waters and can be caught (along with schoolie stripers) while targeting specks.

### **Virginia Beach**

Staff from the Virginia Beach Fishing Center report that offshore trips have been fantastic, especially with dolphin. A few scattered yellowfin tuna, a 143-pound mako shark, and 51-pound wahoo were also caught. Inshore, spadefish, black drum, and flounder were caught in the bay, as well as striped bass. Headboats were doing really well with croaker, and anglers had luck with speckled trout, puppy drum, and bluefish in Rudee Inlet.

Anglers were catching Spanish mackerel, bluefish, and numerous croaker near Fisherman's Wharf Marina last week. The second and third islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel were hot spots. Offshore action was pretty slow over the weekend, with a handful of small gaffer dolphin.

### **Virginia Piers**

At the Ocean View Pier, anglers were catching a lot of croaker last week. Flounder were also caught, but few keepers.

Anglers were catching sea mullet, small croaker, spot, and taylor bluefish at the Lynnhaven Pier. No keeper flounder have been found yet.

Wonderful crabbing was reported from the Virginia Beach Fishing Pier last week. There were also good days of Spanish mackerel, sea mullet, and small spot.

At the Little Island Fishing Pier in Sandbridge, small croaker, flounder, sea mullet, and spot were landed. Spanish mackerel and spadefish were also landed last week.

During the first week since the grand opening of the Buckroe Fishing Pier, a 42-pound cobia was pulled in. Keeper flounder were landed, as well as sea mullet, spot, blow toads, spot, perch, Spanish mackerel and small bluefish.

### **Outer Banks, NC**

Oregon Inlet offshore fishing continues to be to very good for dolphin, with most anglers catching their limits. Other successful catches include tuna, wahoo, king mackerel, blueline tilefish, and amberjack. Bill fishing continues to improve, albeit still on the slow side. A little closer to shore, black sea bass and triggerfish are haunting the wrecks. Just off the beaches, Spanish mackerel and bluefish are keeping the trollers, pier, and surf fishermen happy. Spot, sea mullet, and puffers are also providing dinner for those fishing from the shore or piers. Inside waters had a strong showing of speckled trout and flounder in the

inlet, around the marsh islands. Red drum and striped bass are also available.

South of Oregon Inlet, the shore fishing has seen nice summer diversity in their catches with sea mullet, flounder, and sheepshead on the south beach. Spanish mackerel have been caught around Ramp 55. Pompano, sea mullet, and large cobia were around Ramp 43. Boats working the area also caught cobia, with the largest weighing in at 94 pounds. Black drum can be found behind all of the motels.

Offshore fishing out of Cape Hatteras Inlet has been good with the favorable weather allowing for excellent catches of dolphin, amberjack, grouper, tuna, and wahoo. Inshore fishing has seen a strong run of Spanish mackerel, and cobia can be found by the patient fishermen.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237.

Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.









# ***ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!***

## **THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION**

***WANTS YOUR FISH....  
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,  
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,  
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM
			
TAUTOG	KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
			

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a  
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,  
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

**Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:**

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)  
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)  
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)  
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**





# ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

## Get Hooked! Report at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com)

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at [www.vasaltwaterjournal.com](http://www.vasaltwaterjournal.com).

**Virginia Marine Resources Commission**  
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting





**Recreational Saltwater Fishing**  
Welcome Jgrist,

**Red Drum Reports are Needed!**  
We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

**New 2008 Tautog Regs**

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

**June 16, 2008**  
Members: 1,457  
Trips: 295  
Catches: 3,941

**Related Links**



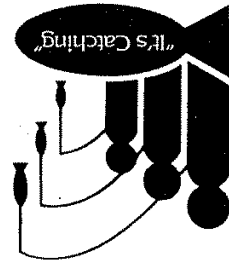
## **VMRC introduces the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!**

Launched in February, 2009, in conjunction with the Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the VMRC has placed collection bins for monofilament fishing line across the state. Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for fish, birds, marine mammals, and boaters by depositing any used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers (see photo). Several of our Saltwater Review partners have placed bins at their locations including Captain Bob's Marina, Chris' Bait and Tackle, the Ocean View Fishing Pier, Jett's Hardware and the NOW OPEN Buckroe Fishing Pier in Hampton. If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new bin locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or [alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov](mailto:alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov).



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NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23607

*Practice*

## CAREFUL CATCH

**REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH**

**Exhaustion \* Loss of Slime \* Wounds \* Time out of Water**